



Resolute Leadership
and
Selfless Service



Sometime in the early 1950s, Mr and Mrs Bandaranaike going on pilgrimage to Kataragama. Located 228 km (142 miles) southeast of Colombo, this city is sacred to Sri Lanka's Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and the indigenous Veddah people making it one of the country's most multicultural locations. Along with other pilgrims the Bandaranaikes wade across the Menik Ganga [photo on previous page] to get to the temple complex, mingling freely with devotees coming from all over the island.

SIRIMAVO





“When six bullets from an assassin’s revolver on the morning of September 25th, 1959 laid low S W R D Bandaranaike, the Premier, the country was aghast.

But the brown Sahibs driven into the wilderness by the Party of Bandaranaike, were openly full of glee. They naturally thought that with the death of the arch architect of the new deal in freedom, his ideas and ideals were for ever scotched.

But they were counting without the common people of the country and the uncommon widow of this uncommon man.

To the people of the country Bandaranaike became overnight almost a divinity, a Bodhisatva, to be cherished, adored and worshipped.

The widow became overnight a warrior. There was no male equal in calibre to Bandaranaike to lead his Party. Mrs Sirima Ratwatte Bandaranaike, her face swollen from tears, came forward as if in answer to a nation’s prayers. She re-organised a broken down leaderless party, gave heart to the downhearted, inspired the despairing and campaigned for the ideals of the dead hero stirring the country with her quiet call for action ...”

D B Dhanapala

eminent journalist and editor, in his book Among Those Present (1962)



Early Training for Public Life

When Sirimavo Bandaranaike was elected Prime Minister of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) in July 1960, she was forty-four years old and a newcomer to representative politics and governance. However, she had been a public figure for many years and, thanks to decades of social work, had a good grasp of the country's development challenges.

As she recalled, "I was known as SWRD's wife, but I was also very well known in my own right. Where a previous Prime Minister's wife may not have been able to step into her husband's shoes as I did when the call came from the people, the fact remained I had gathered my own experiences in public life through several years and in several ways, though I must emphasize that in those years active politics was furthest from my thoughts."

Born in 1916 to an aristocratic family, Sirima Ratwatte was the eldest of six siblings. She grew up in her native Balangoda, in the Ratnapura district, where she had her early education before going to boarding school at St Bridget's Convent, Colombo.

Her life of privilege was tempered by her parents' dedication to community service. Her mother was a reputed Ayurvedic physician and her father was involved in local governance.

After leaving school, young Sirimavo became deep immersed in social welfare work. In 1934-35, she joined her parents to distribute food and medicines to thousands affected by a major malaria epidemic (which infected an estimated 5 million and caused at least 80,000 deaths across the island). For the next few years she worked closely with the Balangoda Social Service League.



Marrying Solomon West Ridgeway Dias (S W R D) Bandaranaike in 1940 changed her life's trajectory. An Oxford-educated lawyer, Mr Bandaranaike was a member of the State Council of Ceylon and its Minister of Local Administration. Sirimavo moved to Colombo and became a housewife to this career politician and aspiring national leader.

He encouraged her to continue social work. So in 1941 Sirimavo joined the Lanka Mahila Samiti (LMS), the premier women's movement in Ceylon at the time. It was there that she refined her skills in public speaking, overcoming her natural shyness. While raising a family of three children, she found the time to make numerous field visits, organise fund raisers and hold office in the voluntary group. (She was its treasurer for eight years, rising to become vice president and then president, resigning in 1960 when she became Prime Minister.)

Young Sirima Ratwatte (left) with her mother and sister Patricia. (Left)

She was born to privilege, but her parents raised her with a firm commitment to helping those less privileged. (Right)

“I feel most strongly that home is a woman's foremost place of work and influence, and looking after her children and husband are duties of the highest importance. But women also have their vital role in civic life, they owe a duty to their country, a duty which cannot and must not be shirked, and at least some of their time should be devoted to social welfare work.”

- Mrs Bandaranaike



When Sirimavo Ratwatte married Solomon West Ridgeway Dias (S.W.R.D.) Bandaranaike on 3 October 1940, the press called it "the wedding of the century" for its grandeur. The uniting of two leading families of Ceylon shaped the political future of the island for decades to come.



Horagolla Walawwa (Horagolla mansion) is the stately house built by Sir Solomon Dias Bandaranaike, father of Mr S W R D Bandaranaike, at the turn of the twentieth century.

It has been the family home of the Bandaranaike family for over a century. The Bandaranaike Samadhi, the mausoleum of Mr S W R D Bandaranaike and Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike, is located east of the Walawwa. *(Left)*

Sirimavo made her first visit abroad to India in November 1940, a month after her wedding. She accompanied her husband, who was a member of the Ceylon Government delegation to New Delhi to discuss the question of franchise for Indian plantation workers.

The delegation included Mr D S Senanayake and Mr G C S Corea (later known as Sir Claude Corea), both fellow Ministers of the State Council. Afterwards, the young couple took a brief holiday in North India visiting Buddhist historical places. *(Right)*



Being a Wife and Mother

Mr Bandaranaike contested in the 1947 first Parliamentary election and won the Attanagalla electorate with a vast majority of 26,852 votes. He became the Minister of Health and Local Government in the Cabinet of D S Senanayake, the first Prime Minister. He was also appointed the Leader of the House – effectively number two in the government.

Mrs Bandaranaike accompanied her husband on his first official visit to Jaffna in October 1947 where they received a warm welcome. Over the next dozen years, she would join him on key national and overseas travels while coping with the demands of motherhood and running her busy household.

Mr and Mrs Bandaranaike were among the dignitaries at ceremonies that marked Ceylon's independence in February 1948. And in May 1950, she was with Mr Bandaranaike when he travelled to Geneva, Switzerland, heading Ceylon's delegation to the Third World Health Assembly. It was Sirimavo's first visit to Europe: she met renowned doctors, scientists and politicians from around the world.

The Bandaranaike family around the mid 1950s. The parents tried to give a normal upbringing for their three children. When they had a rare free evening, the couple listened to music and read, or talked with their children. "Sometimes I would sit at the piano and play for him. He said it soothed his tensed nerves. Or else we would sit quietly together, and I would sew or embroider or more often darn his and the children's clothes while he quietly smoked his pipe and dreamed his dreams," Mrs Bandaranaike reminisced about those days to her biographer years later.



By this time, the Bandaranaikes had three young children: Sunethra born in 1943, Chandrika in 1945, and Anura in 1949. “It was always a wrench to be parted from them, even though I knew they were in safe and loving hands. And the nicest part about returning home was to be with them again,” Mrs Bandaranaike later recalled.

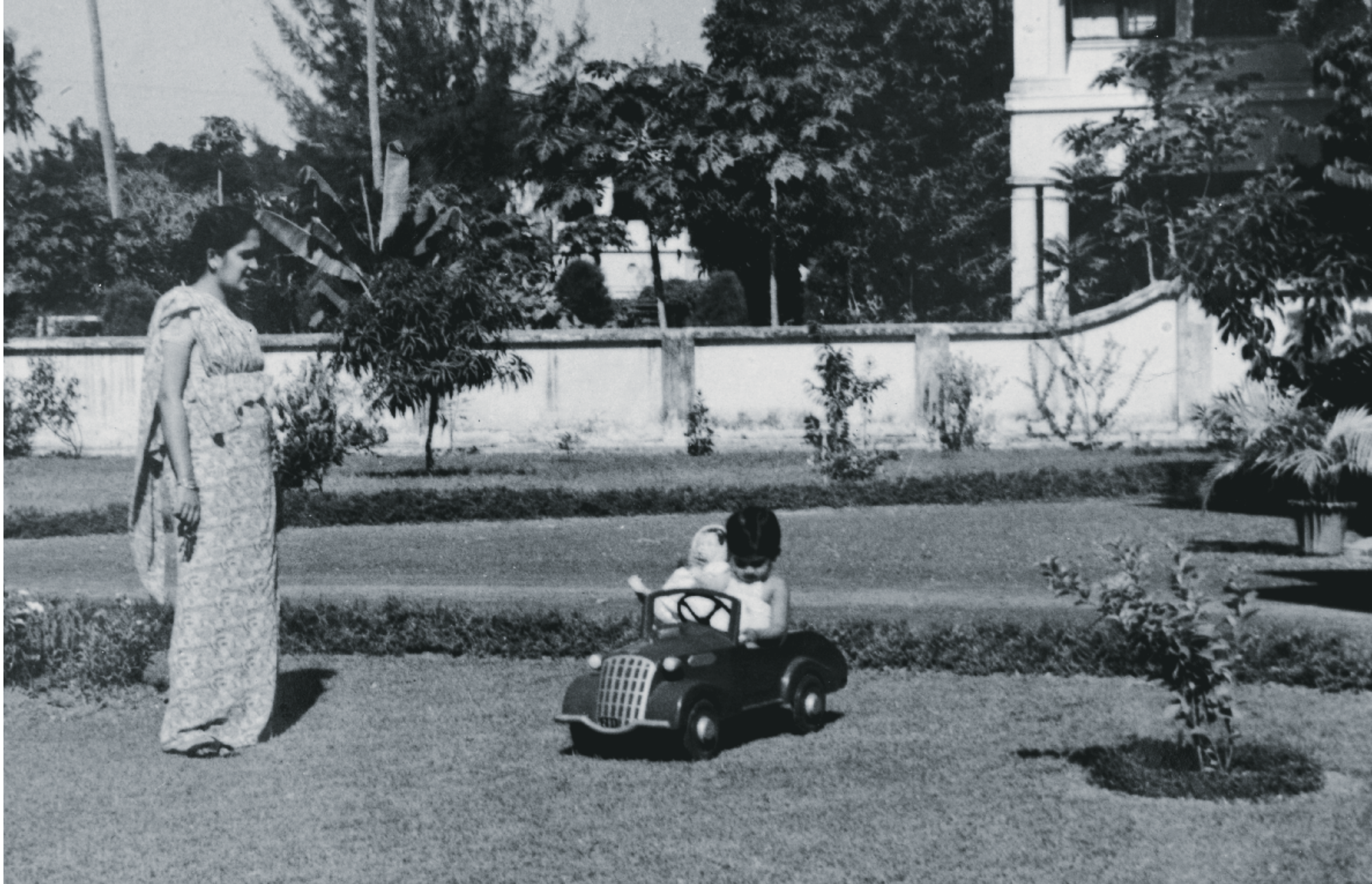
Tintagel, the Bandaranaike residence at Rosmead Place, Colombo 7, had a steady stream of visitors. “In our case one never knew what each day would bring. Mr Bandaranaike had a way of creating excitement around him all the time and the atmosphere surrounding him was always electric. He himself maintained a hectic pace and he lived on his nerves – but it seemed to agree with him perfectly. I had no choice but to get used to it.”

Sirimavo did not join political conversations but became her husband’s confidante. His biographers have recorded how she persuaded him to resign from the government in July 1951. She had long observed his frustrations with the ruling United National Party (UNP) and its failure to meet citizens’ aspirations since independence.

Within a few weeks, he formed the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), which contested on its own in the May 1952 general election. Sirimavo campaigned in the Attanagalle electorate on his behalf while her husband was criss-crossing the country supporting his new party’s candidates. Mr Bandaranaike once again won his seat with a majority of 32,544 votes and became the Leader of the Opposition.

The years in opposition (1952-56) only intensified political discussions and strategizing at Tintagel. As the amiable hostess, Sirimavo was not a participant but she was a perceptive observer and quiet learner.

SIRIMAVO











First Lady of Ceylon 1956 - 1959

At the next general election held in early April 1956, Mr Bandaranaike's coalition named Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (MEP) emerged clear winners, securing 51 out of 95 seats in Parliament. He was sworn in as the fourth Prime Minister of Ceylon on 12 April 1956. Sirimavo Bandaranaike became the First Lady.

The Bandaranaiques opted to live in their own home and not move to the official residence Temple Trees. They thought this would be less disruptive for their young family (the eldest Sunethra was 12, and the youngest Anura seven when they became the First Family). The Prime Minister himself was 57.

Indeed, the parents were keen to raise their children without any special attention or privilege. As Mrs Bandaranaike recalled later, "My own domestic routine, which I had already organised to suit my needs very well, was more or less unchanged, if the pace was slightly more accelerated."

Mrs Bandaranaike had no difficulty balancing being a full-time housewife, mother and First Lady. As done before, she joined her husband at selected events locally and overseas. On some occasions she represented her husband at cultural or charitable events in Sri Lanka that he endorsed but could not attend due to pressures of time.

Having been the wife of a leading politician and key Minister, Mrs Bandaranaike was already used to playing the role of a public figure. "It was just something that had happened to me in the course of circumstances," she recalled about becoming the First Lady after the election victory in April 1956.

While they entertained guests at Temple Trees on a regular basis, the Bandaranaiques preferred hosting informal dinners at home for small groups of special guests or visiting dignitaries. Among those who joined such dinners were Indian PM Pandit Nehru and daughter Indira Gandhi, Chinese PM Zhou Enlai, King Mahendra of Nepal, Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia, President Sukarno of Indonesia, as well as Lord and Lady Mountbatten. The Yugoslavian President Josip Broz Tito and wife Jovanka also visited, cementing a friendship between the two families that lasted for decades.

Mrs Bandaranaike accompanied the Prime Minister on important overseas visits to key cities including London (Commonwealth Prime Ministers conference), Washington, DC and New York (UN General Assembly), New Delhi and Kuala Lumpur. These visits helped consolidate Ceylon's foreign policy which was being reoriented to become non-aligned.

At home, Mrs Bandaranaike did not get involved in political matters but witnessed the multiple challenges her husband had to grapple with in pursuit of his policies and reforms.

She did not yet know that all this formed part of her own political education for the future.

Mr and Mrs Bandaranaike with Dr Aldo Castellani (1874-1971), a well known Italian pathologist and bacteriologist who worked in Colombo from 1903 to 1914 as the first Director of the National Bacteriological Institute (which later became the Medical Research Institute), as well as Professor of Tropical Medicine at the Colombo Medical College. He also had a medical practice mainly for the expatriate and aristocratic families in Ceylon. In 1905, he had treated young Solomon Bandaranaike – then six years old - for diphtheria. This reunion was when the famous physician made a short visit to Colombo in the late 1950s, by which time the boy he once treated had become the island nation's Prime Minister.





“It was just something that had happened to me in the course of circumstances; it was just a designation newspaper columnists and radio commentators and such people gave me. I had never consciously aspired to that position, even though I consciously and actively worked for and willed my husband’s success...”

- Mrs Bandaranaike
looking back on becoming the First Lady

A young Chandrika Bandaranaike receives a prize from her mother as her father, Prime Minister S W R D Bandaranaike, looks on at the prize giving of St Bridget’s Convent, Colombo, on 19 June 1956.



Cambodian Prime Minister Prince Norodom Sihanouk during a visit to Colombo in 1957. He was one of several high profile international personalities to visit Ceylon during that year's Buddha Jayanti to mark the 2,500th anniversary of the passing away of the Buddha. *(Left)*

Arriving in Kuala Lumpur in August 1957 to join the independence of Malaya (which later became Malaysia). *(Right)*





Welcoming the President of India, Dr Rajendra Prasad, visiting Colombo in June 1959. *(Right)*

"All the News That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

LATE CITY EDITION

Mostly fair today and tonight. Increasing cloudiness tomorrow. Temp. range: 75-61. Yesterday: 77.8-65.7

FIVE CENTS

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1959

VOL. CIX, No. 37,135

UNION BREAKS OFF STEEL BARGAINING; ASSAILS INDUSTRY

Talks 'Farcical,' McDonald Says—Company Willing to Continue Negotiating

MEDIATOR HINTS A SHIFT

May Move Discussions From City—Early Taft-Hartley Injunction a Possibility

Statements by the union and the companies, Page 11.

By STANLEY LEVY
The United Steelworkers of America broke off negotiations with the steel industry yesterday.

"We are going home," said David J. McDonald, president of the union. "This farcical business that has gone on since May 3 has ended."

The union's action, taken midway in the eleventh week of two national steel strikes, created two possibilities. One was that Federal mediators might move the steel talks to new ground, possibly Washington or Pittsburgh.

"We don't intend to let this go," declared Joseph P. Pennington, director of the Federal mediation service. "We will continue to try to get the two sides over the line."

Ceylon's Premier Is Killed; Assassin, a Monk, Seized

Bandaranaike Is Victim of Fanatic—Political Situation Is Tense

By The Associated Press
COLOMBO, Ceylon, Saturday, Sept. 26—Prime Minister S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike died today of bullet wounds inflicted yesterday by an assassin. His death left a tense political situation in this British Commonwealth island.

Mr. Bandaranaike died at 7:15 A. M. just twenty-two hours after a professed Buddhist medical monk shot him three times with a 45 caliber revolver. The bullets hit the liver, spleen and arm. The attack occurred at Mr. Bandaranaike's private bungalow.

The Governor General, Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, the British representative in the island, proclaimed virtual martial law and appealed for "absolute peace and calm."

He is expected to ask Wijayananda Dahanayake, Education



S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike

Little Augie Pisano Is Slain With Woman in Auto Here

Little Augie Pisano, an underworld figure since his association with Al Capone in the Prohibition rackets, was found dead last night with a woman on a tree-lined residential street in Jackson Heights, Queens.

Both were in the front seat of a 1959 Cadillac, he with a bullet in the neck and another in the left temple.

The woman, tentatively identified as Janice Drake, 35 years old, was shot in the

HENNINGS SCORES LEIBOWITZ PLAN TO CUT MIGRATION

Jack Also Is Opposed to It—Teacher in Classroom Robbed by 2 Youths

Text of Regent's statement is printed on Page 17.

By ROBERT ALDEN
The plan of Kings County Judge Samuel S. Leibowitz to discourage migration into the city as a means of fighting youth crime came under sharp attack yesterday.

Senator Thomas C. Hennings Jr., chairman of the Senate subcommittee on juvenile delinquency, said he did not favor such a program. "Of course I don't believe in any restrictive legislation applying to minors," the Democratic Senator from Missouri said here.

On Thursday Judge Leibowitz told the subcommittee that immigration into the city "from all parts of the country and the Caribbean" should be discouraged until the city had eradicated the slum areas that spawned crime.

Hobbers Carry Knife
In his testimony on the second and final day of the hearings here the judge also called for a state law to require one year's residence in the city before a person was eligible for relief.

REGENTS SUPPORT BOND AMENDMENT FOR CITY SCHOOLS

Ask State Voters to Accept Plan on Nov. 3—Expert on Financing Dissents

By LEONARD RUDER
The State Board of Regents announced yesterday its support of a \$500,000,000 school bond issue by the city.

The board, the state's highest educational policy-making and regulatory body, urged voters to approve the measure in the election Nov. 3. Earlier this month, Dr. James E. Allen Jr., the State Education Commissioner, had announced that he was backing the bond issue.

The form of an amendment in the State Constitution, which would enable the city to borrow up to \$50,000,000 annually over the next ten years outside its constitutional debt limit. The money would have to be matched by the city with equal sums raised within the debt limit, and the total amount would be limited to school construction.

Plea by Bond Experts
Meanwhile, however, a specialist in the field of school bond financing said the city should think at long last of setting its fiscal house in order rather than burdening itself with further

EISENHOWER, KHRUSHCHEV BEGIN CAMP DAVID TALKS AFTER HELICOPTER FLIGHT



AGENDA IS OPEN

Both Parties Express the Belief Progress Will Be Made

Text of talks by Herter and Khrushchev, Page 12.

By HARRISON E. SALISBURY
Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES
GETTYSBURG, Pa., Sept. 25—President Eisenhower and Premier Khrushchev began a general discussion of world affairs at a mountain retreat in Maryland tonight.

"Mr Bandaranaike called himself the 'People's Prime Minister' and he was always accessible to the people. Our gates at Rosmead Place were always wide open, our door never shut or barred against anyone. People called at any time of the day and were sure of a welcome and a word from him if he was at home. Very few even bothered to make an appointment. And he would speak to all so freely and so courteously. That something like this could happen – that someone would walk up to him in that cowardly way and destroy him – never once crossed his mind, or if it did, he brushed it aside as stark melodrama. Neither did I dream that such a terrible thing could ever happen to us in our own home..."

- Mrs Bandaranaike
quoted in her 1975 biography



25 – 26 September 1959

On the morning of 25 September 1959, Prime Minister S W R D Bandaranaike was greeting visitors at his home in Colombo when he was shot at close range by a Buddhist monk. Rushed to the nearby general hospital, a team of top surgeons performed emergency surgery on the wounded PM. Even though he regained consciousness - and requested clemency for his assassin and dictated a message urging the nation to remain calm - his condition deteriorated overnight. He passed away the next morning.

Mr Bandaranaike was 60 years old at the time of his death. He had been in office for only three and a half years out of his five-year term. There was so much unfinished business - and great uncertainty about the future of the reforms he had initiated.

On 28 September 1959, assassinated Prime Minister Bandaranaike's body is brought to Parliament. Mr Pieter Keuneman (partly hidden), Senator E B Wikramanayake, Mr G G Ponnambalam, Sir John Kotelawala, Mr M D Banda, Dr Eric Brohier, Sir Razik Fareed, Senator E W Kannangara and Senator Doric de Souza are carrying the coffin.

“He [Mr Bandaranaike] had cleared the decks for action to reform and reorganise the framework of the old creaking but crushing colonial system of administration, to make Ceylon a Republic on the Indian model, to change the wage and salary structure and to make finance facilities available to the rural population when suddenly dramatic tragedy overtook him...”

D B Dhanapala
in Among Those Present (1962)



The grief-stricken family performs last rites for the slain leader at his funeral



Every year on 26 September, the Bandaranaike family, party members and well-wishers gather at the Horagolla Bandaranaike Samadhi to commemorate the late Mr Bandaranaike. This was the second such commemoration on 26 September 1961.

Entering Party Politics

In 1960 there were two general elections in Ceylon. In the first, held on 19 March, the results were inconclusive. The SLFP led by former minister C P de Silva secured 46 seats. The UNP that won 50 (out of a total 151 seats) formed a government - but was defeated in Parliament within a month in a vote of confidence.

The second general election was fixed for 20 July 1960. As political parties once again prepared for the polls, Mrs Bandaranaike finally accepted the SLFP leadership on 24 May 1960. In the event of victory, she would become Prime Minister.

That was a clear change of heart. Following her husband's assassination, she had publicly and repeatedly declined to enter politics.

As Bradman Weerakoon has written, "For Sirimavo, the eight months that elapsed between the death of her husband and her assumption of the leadership of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party was a period of intense introspection. Where did her principal obligations lie? With her young family of two daughters, Sunethra and Chandrika and son Anura, now bereft of their father's guidance? Or with his political party, which was now deprived of his leadership?"

Dressed in pure white, Mrs Bandaranaike speaks at an election rally while campaigning in support of SLFP candidates in the July 1960 general election. She did not contest for an electorate herself on that occasion, instead devoting all her energies to the party's national campaign. After the SLFP won and formed a government, she was sworn in as a Senator as the Constitution required the Prime Minister to be drawn from either the lower house or upper house in the bicameral legislature that existed at the time.

SIRIMAVO



So what triggered the change of heart? “The primary motivation that drove her to accept what was, personally to her, an unattractive job, was her conviction that no other person as leader could fulfil the yet unachieved goals set by her late husband,” says Weerakoon.

As party leader, Mrs Bandaranaike mobilised party members and organisers across the island to face another general election. She chose not to contest a seat on her own and instead led the overall national campaign. “I have come to the conclusion,” she said at the time, “that I am better able to serve the party as President without limiting my actions through obligations to one electorate”.

Throughout the campaign, she pledged at dozens of meetings she addressed: “I will carry out the policies of my husband”.

Mrs Bandaranaike was appointed President of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) in May 1960, and held that position for over two decades, both in government and in opposition.

SIRIMAVO





Mrs Bandaranaike campaigning in July 1960

“If Mr Bandaranaike’s stature as a politician and leader was built up over decades of campaigning, Sirimavo donned hers like a cloak that had been lying in her wardrobe for years, unworn, but which had been pressed and kept ready for wearing at any given moment.”

Maureen Seneviratne
biographer



Ceylon's Lady Boss, Sirimavo

Clad in her white sari of mourning, the world's first and only woman prime minister rallied a crowd of admirers under the blazing Ceylonese sun. When Premier Solomon West Ridgeway Dias Bandaranaike was assassinated by a Buddhist monk last fall, his wife Sirimavo reluctantly undertook a campaign to save the Freedom party which he had started. Trying hard to salvage her husband's foundering socialist program, she formed a coalition which last month rolled up a 66-seat majority in the House. "Now," she said, "I must spend my time in the cabinet room, not the pantry." Taking over as foreign affairs and defense ministers as well as prime minister, she has introduced nationalization schemes in education and life insurance. An avowed neutralist, she has so far managed to ignore the local Communists who helped her to power. But recently she took the ominous step of seizing control of the press. "People forget I had 20 years of political education from my husband," she says. "I am not as inexperienced as they make me out."

The illustrated current affairs weekly LIFE, published in the United States, ran a special story in its issue dated 5 September 1960 on Mrs Bandaranaike. "Taking over as foreign affairs and defence minister as well as Prime Minister, she has introduced nationalization schemes in education and life insurance. An avowed neutralist, she has so far managed to ignore the local Communists who helped her to power," the story said in part.





21 July 1960

In the general election held on 20 July 1960, the SLFP won 75 of the 151 elected seats. With the support of eight other elected members and six appointed members, the party was able to form a government.

As the SLFP leader, Mrs Bandaranaike became the sixth Prime Minister of Ceylon – and the first woman in the world to hold that high office.

“I felt both awed and humbled,” she later recalled. “Awed because of the great yoke placed upon my shoulders, the sacred seal put into my hands. Very, very humbled because here was tangible proof the people had placed their faith and trust in me.”

She added, “My thoughts went back to that other victory – of 1956 – and a deep sadness fell on my spirit. This also should have been *his* victory... he was its architect, he the real victor. Then I realised the full implication of my success and I was convinced it *was* his victory after all. Death had not extinguished my husband’s achievement, even if it had snuffed out the bright flame of his mortal life.”

She was at the Horagolla walawwa (the Bandaranaike country mansion) on election night. By early morning the following day, her party had emerged the clear winner. Before heading to Colombo, she visited her husband’s samadhi (mausoleum) and stood there in deep silence for a few moments.

At 1.30 in the afternoon of 21 July 1960, Mrs Bandaranaike took the oath of office as Prime Minister before Governor General Sir Oliver Goonetilleke.

That evening, she addressed the nation by radio. A key excerpt: “By their verdict, the people have clearly affirmed their faith in the democratic socialist policies initiated by my late husband. It was far from my mind to achieve any personal glory for myself when I assumed the leadership of the party at the request of its leaders. I knew that if I did not take this step, the forces of reaction would once again begin to oppress the masses for whose salvation my husband sacrificed his very life...”

Ceylon’s election outcome and its new leader drew plenty of media attention around the world.

“Gentle widow heads for job as Premier,” wrote *London News Chronicle*.

“There will be need for a new word. Presumably we shall have to call her a Stateswoman,” said the *Evening News* of London.

The New York Times noted how “Mrs Bandaranaike is no longer the shy, retiring woman of a year ago. Politics has hardened her.”

On 23 July 1960, the new Prime Minister announced her first Cabinet of Ministers comprising 11 ministers. Mrs Bandaranaike took on the portfolios of Defence and External Affairs. The other Ministers were: Felix Dias Bandaranaike (Finance); C P de Silva (Agriculture, Land, Irrigation and Power); Sam P C Fernando (Justice); T B Ilangaratne (Commerce, Trade, Food and Shipping); A P Jayasuriya (Health); P B G Kalugalle (Transport and Works); Badi-ud-din Mahmud (Education and Broadcasting); Mahanama Samaraweera (Local Government and Housing); Maithripala Senanayake (Industries, Home and Cultural Affairs); and Sarath Wijesinghe (Labour and Nationalised Services).

Having just been sworn in as Prime Minister, Mrs Bandaranaike leaves Queen’s House (now President’s House) in Colombo Fort in a motorcade to return to Tintagel, her home at Rosmead Place.

SIRIMAVO





“People forget that I had 20 years of political education from my husband. I am not as inexperienced as they make me out!”

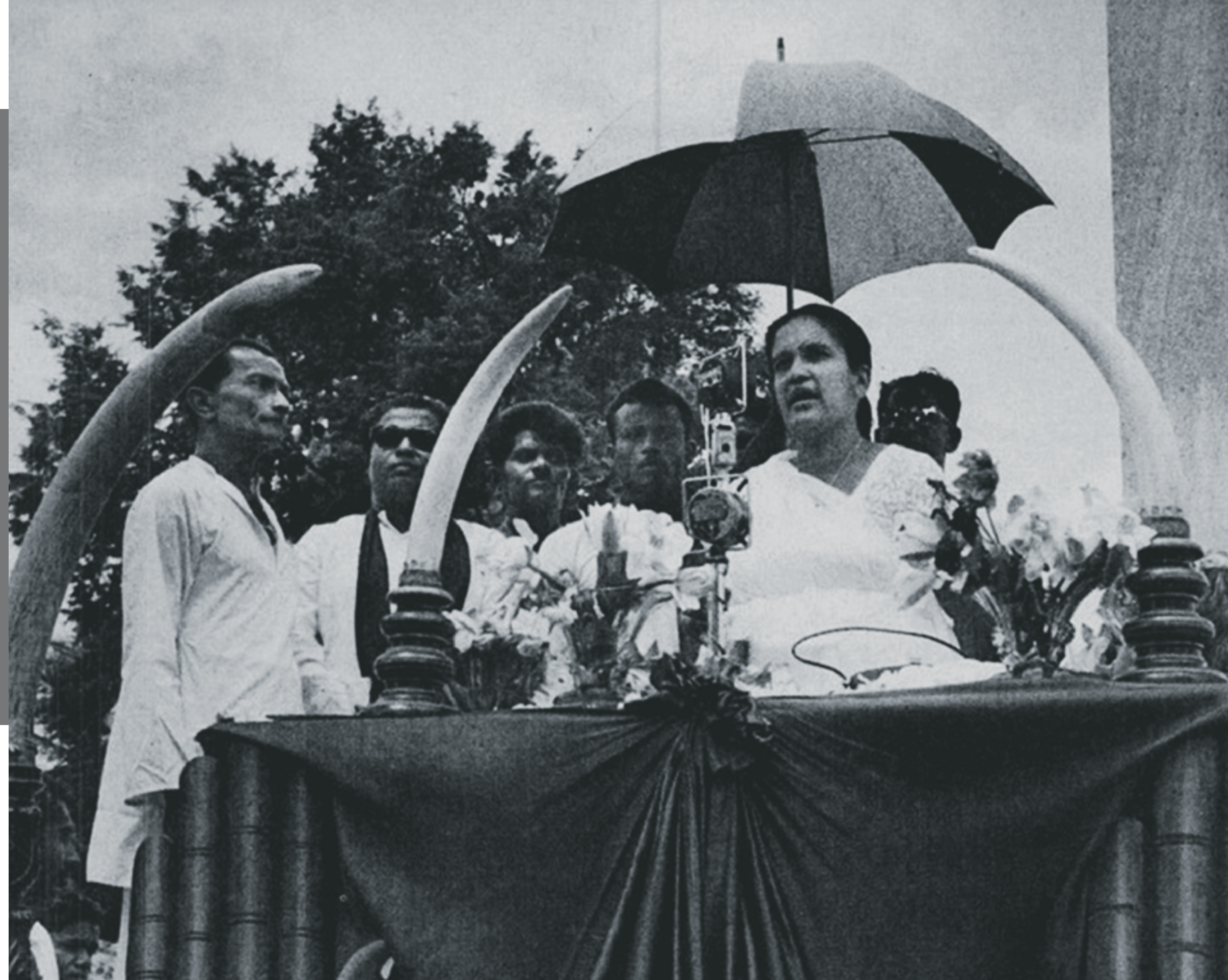
- Mrs Bandaranaike

shortly after being sworn in as the world's first woman Prime Minister

After taking oaths as Prime Minister, Mrs Bandaranaike visited Sri Maha Modhi (the sacred Bo tree) in Anuradhapura, and Dalada Maligawa (Temple of the Tooth Relic) in Kandy – two of the most important places of worship for Buddhists.

The city of Anuradhapura was the capital of ancient Lanka for over a millennium, and late Mr Bandaranaike was closely associated with its restoration and preservation. Here Mrs Bandaranaike is addressing a crowd near the Sri Maha Bodhi Vihara in Anuradhapura on 25 July 1960.

SIRIMAVO

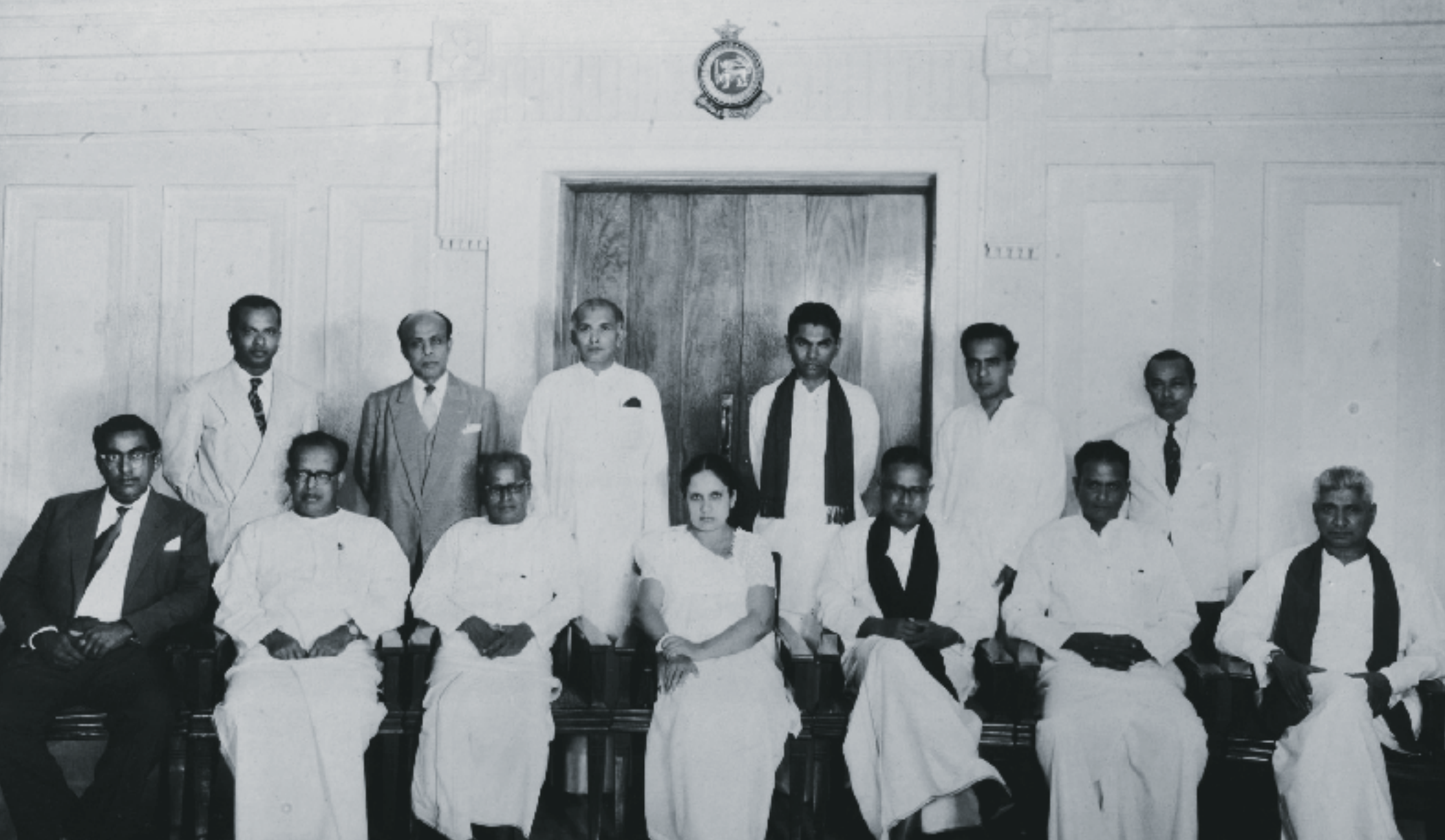




“She brought with her no university degree, parliamentary experience or administrative knowledge. But what she had were formidable enough – personal magnetism to draw the masses; ability to command the loyalty and respect of her ministerial colleagues; and the ability to convince the public that she was a woman of good moral character who would be honest in her public dealings.”

Bradman Weerakoon
in his 2004 memoirs

Mrs Bandaranaike got down to work immediately after being sworn in. She chose to operate from the Prime Minister's official residence known as Temple Trees. Photo shows her on the first day of work with civil servant Bradman Weerakoon who became Secretary to the PM. At 30 years, Mr Weerakoon had already served as Secretary to four previous PMs including Mr S W R D Bandaranaike. He would go on to work with a total of nine PMs and Presidents of Sri Lanka in an illustrious career spanning half a century.



Mrs Bandaranaike's first Cabinet of Ministers appointed on 23 July 1960. *(Left)*

On 27 July 1960, Mrs Bandaranaike arrives at the Cabinet office for the first Cabinet meeting of her new government. *(Right)*

SIRIMAVO





The Constitution at the time required the Prime Minister to occupy a seat of Parliament or the Senate which was the Upper House, within three months of being sworn in. Accordingly, one SLFP senator resigned and Mrs Bandaranaike was appointed in his place as a member of the Senate on 5 August 1960. She was represented in Parliament by Mr Felix Dias Bandaranaike as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Defence and External Affairs.

SIRIMAVO



On 12 August 1960, Mrs Bandaranaike presents the Throne Speech (policy statement) of her new government to the Governor-General Sir Oliver Goonetilleke. Among other matters, the speech announced that steps would be taken to amend the Constitution and to establish a republican form of government in Ceylon.

SIRIMAVO





First Term as Prime Minister July 1960 – March 1965

Mrs Bandaranaike's first term as Prime Minister spanned from 21 July 1960 to 25 March 1965. Continuing the practice by previous PMs, she also served as the Minister of Defence and Minister of External Affairs.

On the day she was sworn in, she pledged: "My party will not deviate from any of the policies or the programme of work of the late Mr Bandaranaike."

On August 12, 1960, the Throne Speech of the new government was read in all three languages. It outlined the new Premier's policies which were a clear continuation of the Bandaranaike political and economic reforms pursued since 1956.

Speaking in the Senate on 1 September 1960, she reiterated, "My government will not move to any extreme either on the political left or the right."

As her biographer Maureen Seneviratne has noted, "The early sixties were no halcyon days for any government. An exploding population and ever decreasing external assets were creating a critical financial situation in the country. Unemployment and under-employment were menacing the economy, and food and welfare subsidies were bogging it down."

Arriving in Anuradhapura on 21 May 1961, the Prime Minister is received by local political leaders and business leaders



Notwithstanding these and other formidable challenges (which included many agitations by political opponents), the government initiated various policies and programmes especially in agriculture and industry sectors.

Certain reforms were contentious. One was the state taking over of private schools set up and managed by religious entities. Another was the nationalisation of foreign oil companies (despite vehement protests by Western countries), as well as of life insurance companies. Restrictions on imports and foreign exchange were also hotly debated.

In early 1962, she survived an attempted *coup d'état* by some high-ranking military and police officers. The plan was to topple the government on the night of 27 January 1962, and arrest the Prime Minister, several key Ministers, government officials and advisers. The coup was abortive due to a leak, and the ring leaders were arrested and prosecuted.

In the aftermath, the government informed Parliament that the name of Governor-General Sir Oliver Goonetilleke too had come up during investigations of the coup attempt. In late February 1962, Queen Elizabeth II (who was still the head of state in the Dominion of Ceylon) consented to a proposal made by the government of Ceylon to appoint Mr William Gopallawa as the new Governor-General. He took over on 20 March 1962.

One of the most notable achievements of Mrs Bandaranaike's first government was the agreement with the Indian government on the question of citizenship status of nearly one million persons of Indian origin working in the plantation estates. In October 1964, she signed what is known widely as the Sirima-Shastri Pact that resolved the long-drawn matter.

Mrs Bandaranaike is seen here with two of her most trusted senior officials. In the centre is Sinhala and Pali language scholar Dr Gunapala Malalasekera who was Ceylon's first Ambassador to the USSR in 1957, and later served as High Commissioner to Canada and Permanent Representative to the UN Headquarters in New York from 1961 to 1963. The PM, who was also the Foreign Minister, later appointed him High Commissioner to the UK, which position he held from 1963 to 1967. On the right is Mr Neil Quintus (N Q) Dias, a civil servant who was the Permanent Secretary of Defence and Foreign Affairs from 1960 to 1965. He was also the *de facto* Chief Adviser to Prime Minister.

“The general election is over. We must now set about the task of solving national problems. We must sink all differences that arose both among persons and groups during the election, and work for the peace of the country and unity of the nation.”

- Mrs Bandaranaike
in her first post-election speech

During the ceremonial opening of Parliament at Independence Hall on 12 August 1960, the new Prime Minister is seen speaking to the Minister of Health Mr A P Jayasuriya, a founding member of the SLFP. He later served as a Senior Vice President of the party.

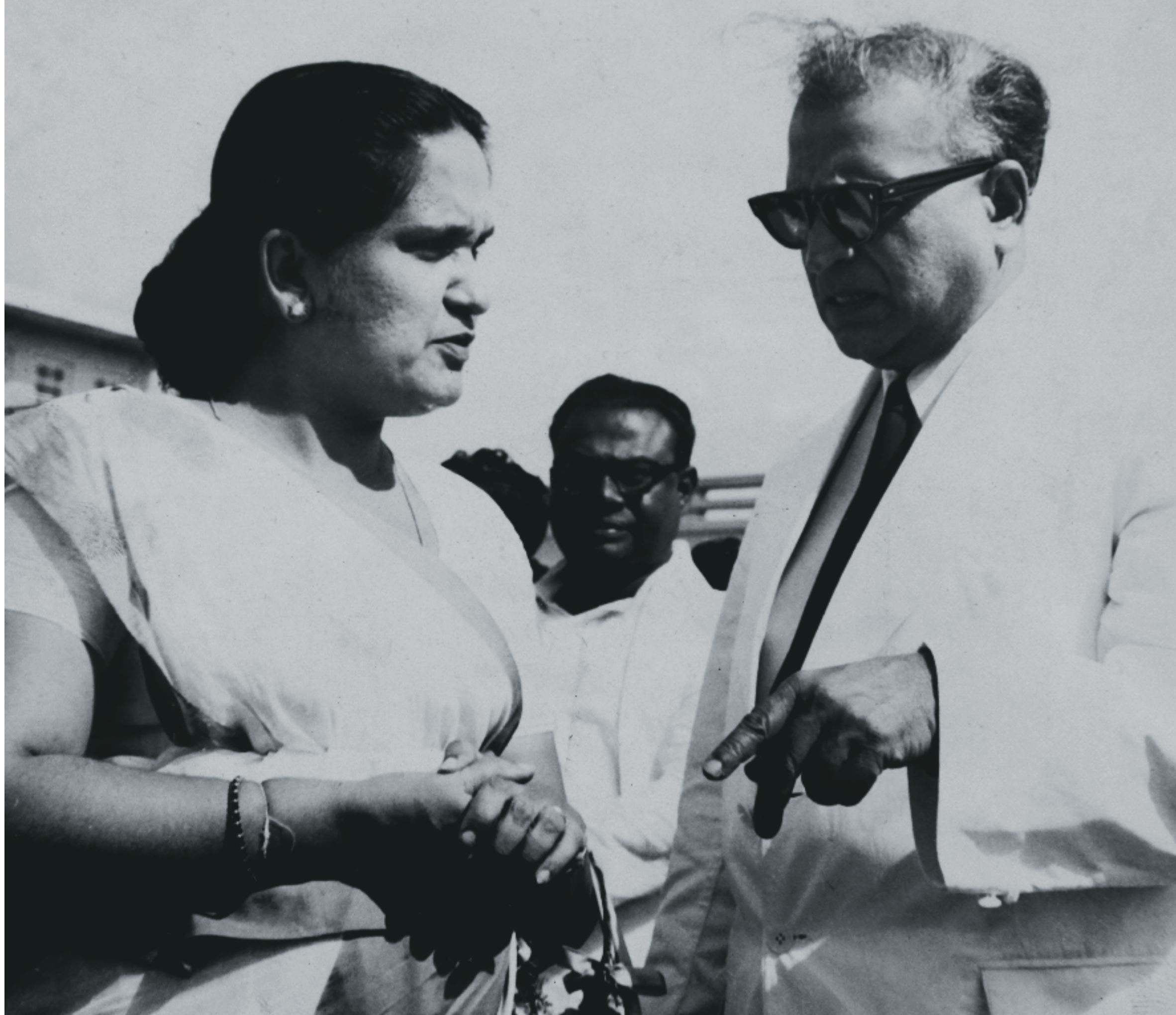
SIRIMAVO





In 1961, Mrs Bandaranaike's government founded the People's Bank as a state-owned commercial bank to provide banking services to rural communities who until then did not have access to financial services. People's Bank was inaugurated on 1 July 1961, by the Prime Minister along with Mr T B Ilangaratne, Minister of Commerce, Trade, Food and Shipping. Its first chairman was Mr Vincent Subasinghe, and the first branch was opened at Duke Street, Colombo. *(Left)*

On 5 March 1961 at the Ratmalana Airport, Dr N M Perera makes a point while talking to Mrs Bandaranaike just before she left for London for the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference. In the background is Mr Savumiamoorthy Thondaman, founder and leader of Ceylon Workers' Congress (CWC), a political party representing the Indian Tamils of Sri Lanka. From 1960 to 1970, Mr Thondaman was an appointed Member of Parliament for Stateless Persons. *(Right)*





On Budget Day 28 July 1961, the Prime Minister takes tea in the House of Parliament with her Finance Minister Mr Felix Dias Bandaranaike, who in 1960 had become the youngest Cabinet Minister of Finance in the Commonwealth, at the age of 29. Facing the PM is Mr Dudley Senanayake, Leader of the Opposition. Some members of the Diplomatic Corps are also in the group.

The Governor-General Sir Oliver Goonetilleke talks with the Prime Minister at the Ratmalana Airport shortly before she and the rest of the Ceylon delegation left for Belgrade on 30 August 1961 to attend the Neutral Nations Conference (which marked the inauguration of the Non-Aligned Movement).

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Mrs Bandaranaike engaged the public whenever possible. On 6 September 1962, she is seen addressing a public gathering at Rikillagaskada, a village in the Central Province.

Herself an active Girl Guide during her school days, Prime Minister Mrs Bandaranaike receives a salute from the scouts at the Azhar Muslim School in Akurana (Kandy district), which she visited on 24 November 1963.





On 17 May 1962, Mrs Bandaranaike visits the Maligakanda pirivena (temple) in Colombo where an exposition of sacred relics of the Buddha's chief disciples was underway. *(Left)*

Prime Minister Mrs Bandaranaike returns to her old school, St Bridget's Convent in Colombo, in July 1963 for an exhibition and fair. Founded in 1902 by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd order, it is one of the earliest mission schools set up in Ceylon by the Roman Catholic Church of Ireland. Young Sirimavo spent 11 years at this school and she acknowledged how the convent education had a lasting influence on her life. However, she always remained a Buddhist. *(Right)*



Leading from the Opposition

April 1965 – May 1970

Mrs Bandaranaike's government unexpectedly lost its majority in Parliament on 3 December 1964 when some MPs crossed over to the opposition. Parliament was dissolved on 17 December, and a new general election was fixed for 22 March 1965.

At that election, the SLFP won 41 seats while the UNP secured 66. Even though the UNP did not have a majority in the House, it formed a coalition with several smaller parties and managed to form a government. As the head of the second largest party in Parliament, Mrs Bandaranaike became the Leader of the Opposition on 5 April 1965 – marking another first in the democratic world.

This time she had contested the Attanagalle electorate and won it with a large majority of over 16,500. For the first time, she entered Parliament as an elected member (previously she was a nominated Senator). From 1965 to 1970, she sharpened her skills as a Parliamentarian while holding the coalition government to account.

At the same time, as the SLFP leader, she worked on strengthening the party membership and organs – trade unions, women's movements and youth leagues - were all overhauled. Even though they were not in government, the party's large vote base remained intact: the SLFP won six of the seven by-elections held between November 1966 and April 1967.

At the reading of the Throne Speech of 1965, Opposition Leader Sirimavo Bandaranaike chats with government leaders including the Minister of State Mr J R Jayewardene, while Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake looks on.

Mrs Bandaranaike acquired greater political maturity and acumen during the five years in opposition. As her biography notes, “Like a general recalled to the War Office after months in the forefront of the battle, Sirimavo naturally felt the pace easier than it had been when she was at the helm of affairs, even though as Leader of the Opposition she had her tasks cut out for her.”

She also learned some useful lessons in life and politics. “She saw how people cluster round those in power like moths round a flame -- and then deserted them when the light was focused elsewhere.”



Mrs Bandaranaike shares a lighter moment with Mrs Mackie Ratwatte and Mrs Mallika Ratwatte during an embassy reception. The latter entered Parliament by winning a by-election in 1966 and represented the Balangoda electorate. *(Left)*

Mrs Bandaranaike and her son Anura stepping into a BOAC plane at the Colombo Airport on 19 May 1967. During her five years as the opposition leader, she made several official or personal overseas visits including Egypt, the USSR, Yugoslavia, France and the United Kingdom. *(Right)*





“I learned...to judge myself impersonally, in a more detached manner, as a politician first and woman later. I learned the fine art of self-criticism; its vital importance in the political sphere. I learned to take adverse criticism in my stride.”

- Mrs Bandaranaike
reflecting on the period 1965 to 1970

On 24 July 1965, Mrs Bandaranaike leaves the Prime Minister's office after a discussion on attempts to include names of non-nationals in the electoral lists in plantation areas. Among those who participated in the discussion were Dr N M Perera, the LSSP Leader, Mr Pieter Keuneman, the General Secretary of the CP (Moscow Wing), Mr R G Senanayake, MP for Dambadeniya, Mr T M B Herath, MP for Walapane, and Senator Ananda Dassanayake.



Second Term as Prime Minister May 1970 – July 1977

In June 1968, Mrs Bandaranaike signed a common agreement bringing her Sri Lanka Freedom Party under one umbrella with the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) and the Communist Party (CP). It was this alliance, known as the United Front, that contested the next general election held on 27 May 1970.

At that election, the United Front won 116 seats out of the total 151 (SLFP 91, LSSP 19 and CP 6) and secured a two thirds majority in Parliament. Mrs Bandaranaike was re-elected from Attanagalle with a majority of 21,723 votes.

Mrs Bandaranaike was sworn in before Governor General William Gopallawa at Queen's House on 29 May 1970. Her second term as Prime Minister spanned from that day until 23 July 1977. During this period, she also held the portfolios of Defence and External Affairs as well as Planning and Employment.

A key election pledge was the adopting of a home-grown Constitution to replace what the British drafted in 1947. Within weeks, the new government convened a Constituent Assembly comprising all members of Parliament to draft, adopt and operate a new Constitution. Its first meeting was held on 19 July 1970. The speaker of Parliament, Mr Stanley Tillekeratne, presided over the proceedings. The whole process lasted nearly two years.

The new Constitution, when it was finally adopted on 22 May 1972, transformed the country into a Republic while retaining the Westminster style Parliamentary form of Government and staying within the British Commonwealth. The Governor General



“In this moment of unprecedented and grave danger, the Prime Minister was calm, collected, indefatigable and totally focused. She was an oasis of calm in an arid desert of rumour and panic. The despondency and fear in the faces of most of the Ministers was visible and to a significant extent, contagious...”

M D D Pieris

Secretary to the PM (1970-77) on Mrs Bandaranaike's handling of the April 1971 uprising

On 29 May 1970, Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike is being sworn in as the Prime Minister of Ceylon for the second time by Governor General William Gopallawa.

position became President who was the head of state but without executive powers that were vested in the Prime Minister. The country's official name changed from Ceylon to Republic of Sri Lanka.

On that day, Mrs Bandaranaike took the oath of office as the first Prime Minister of the new Republic. She then nominated Mr William Gopallawa as the first President.

The Constitution making process had been disrupted by the armed uprising mounted by the Marxist party called Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) in April 1971. The insurgents were a few thousand disgruntled rural youth who, despite being poorly armed and inadequately trained, managed to seize police and administrative power in parts of the country for some weeks.

The government appealed for international help which arrived quickly from friendly countries in the West and the East. The security forces regained control of most areas within a few weeks. The government issued two amnesties in May and June 1971, which led to most insurgents surrendering. The leaders were prosecuted and jailed, while the lower rankers were sent to rehabilitation centres. The government set up a National Committee of Reconstruction for this purpose and to re-establish civil authority in the affected areas.

To tackle the root causes of youth unrest, the government embarked on a major programme of land reform that involved limiting the extent of privately held lands, redistributing excess land among the landless poor and setting up farming cooperatives. Plantation estates owned by foreign companies were also nationalised.

The early 1970s were challenging times for all developing countries. There was a scarcity of grains in the world market that affected the food security of many countries including Sri Lanka. The oil crisis of 1973-74 led to a tripling of oil prices within a few months, drastically draining foreign exchange reserves of countries dependent on imported petroleum.

Faced with a severe balance of payment problem, the UF government started food rationing and launched a major campaign to grow more food locally. As she had done during the 1971 uprising, Mrs Bandaranaike also sought international help.

Once again, assistance came from many and varied sources – a tribute to her foreign policy. Among much else, rice from China and Pakistan, and oil from Iraq was sent to Sri Lanka on easy payment terms. Western countries arranged for grant aid.

While these actions helped avert the worst outcomes, the austerity measures were unpopular while both inflation and unemployment rates remained high. It was a case of development under duress for much of Mrs Bandaranaike's second term as Prime Minister.

Despite these difficulties, the government embarked on some long-term development initiatives. Chief among them was the Mahaweli River diversion programme, whose first phase was implemented from 1970 onward. It provided irrigated water for over 200,000 acres (80,937 ha) of Dry Zone land by 1976.

While managing domestic challenges, Mrs Bandaranaike continued her progressive, non-aligned foreign policies. The culmination was when Sri Lanka hosted the fifth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Colombo in August 1976, where Mrs Bandaranaike was elected chair (for more details, please see the section on her international engagement).

By 1975, however, the ruling coalition had come apart (even though the SLFP still had a Parliamentary majority) and political crises continued. At the next general election, held on 21 July 1977, the SLFP was defeated: the party went from having a two-thirds majority to being the third largest party in the next Parliament, with only eight seats. Mrs Bandaranaike retained the Attanagalla seat, albeit with a narrower margin.

On 15 June 1970, the new Prime Minister presents her first Throne Speech (policy statement) to Governor General William Gopallawa. It declares that steps would be taken to transform Ceylon to a republic, ending 22 years of Dominion status under which the country still owed allegiance to the British crown. It also says that all foreign banks are to be nationalised and specialized banks be set up to finance development in industry, agriculture and trade.

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Mrs Bandaranaike arrives for the first meeting of the Constituent Assembly held at the Nava Rangahala, a theatre at Royal College in Colombo on 19 July 1970



The Prime Minister with key political leaders in the 1970 Parliament is seen discussing the drafting of a new Constitution. On her right is Dr Colvin R de Silva, Cabinet Minister of Plantation Industries and Constitutional Affairs, who went on to draft the 1972 Republican Constitution. The then Leader of the Opposition, Mr J R Jayewardene, is also in the photo.



The Constituent Assembly, comprising all members of Parliament elected in 1970, are meeting at the Nava Rangahala, Colombo. The United Front government held all meetings of the Constituent Assembly away from the Parliament building to ensure a clear break from the British drafted 1947 Constitution. The process was presided over by Mr Stanley Tillekeratne, who was Speaker of the House, and supported by Mr S S (Sam) Wijesinha, Clerk to the House (which position became the Secretary General of Parliament from 1978).





Shortly after adopting the new Constitution that turned Ceylon into the Republic of Sri Lanka, Mrs Bandaranaike visits the Dalada Maligawa in Kandy accompanied by the new President Mr William Gopallawa.

Prime Minister Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike speaks at the ceremony to proclaim the Republic of Sri Lanka on 22 May 1972. President Mr William Gopallawa is seated immediately on her left, and the new national emblem is seen in the background. She called the new Constitution a 'gateway to the future' and appealed to all citizens to join in nation building. She also said the country's foreign policy would continue to be shaped by non-alignment and dedication to the United Nations.

Mrs Bandaranaike arrives in Parliament with Finance Minister Dr N M Perera for her government's first budget speech on 14 June 1970.

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On 1 January 1971, Mrs Bandaranaike is among a distinguished gathering of diplomats, parliamentarians and religious dignitaries at the renaming of the Katunayake Airport (close to Colombo) as Bandaranaike International Airport (BIA). The BIA, which has been used for civil aviation from 1967, is the country's main international airport and principal gateway to the outside world. *(Left)*

On 11 January 1971, Mrs Bandaranaike is seen at the Bandaranaike International Airport leaving for Singapore on 11 January 1971 to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting. She is being escorted by Mr Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Minister of Local Government, Public Administration and Home Affairs, Mr Maithripala Senanayake, Minister of Irrigation, Power and Highways, and Mr Badi-ud-din Mahmud, Minister of Education. *(Right)*





On 13 February 1971, Mrs Bandaranaike joins a *shramadana* (donation of labour) to prepare the ground for building the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH) in the heart of Colombo. Opened on 17 May 1973, BMICH was an outright gift from China to the people of Sri Lanka.



The April 1971 youth uprising started even before the United Front government completed its first year. While there had been intelligence reports about youth radicalisation, the police and armed forces were not prepared, and the armed youth took advantage of it to stage surprise attacks. The government took immediate steps to secure the capital, but it was days or weeks before control was regained in some rural areas.

How the government responded with resolve and restraint has been fully documented in official documents as well as in analyses or personal accounts written by senior officials who were privy to the unfolding events.

As Mr M D D Pieris, Secretary to the Prime Minister at the time, noted in his memoirs, “In this moment of unprecedented and grave danger, the Prime Minister was calm, collected, indefatigable and totally focused. She was an oasis of calm in an arid desert of rumour and panic. The despondency and fear in the faces of most of the Ministers was visible and to a significant extent, contagious.”

Mr Pieris also says: “She [Mrs Bandaranaike] was clearly in charge; clearly in control; and in fact solely in charge. She listened carefully and decided quickly. There were no committees. When the Cabinet met, the Ministers were briefed by the Prime Minister strictly on a need-to-know basis. She was not prepared to reveal to the Cabinet or anyone else sensitive plans and operational details. She was the dominant and decisive influence, and it was a common saying that the Prime Minister was the ‘only man in the Cabinet.’”

Sometime during the second half of 1971, the Prime Minister meets some youth who had taken part in the April 1971 uprising, later surrendered and undergoing rehabilitation.

Dr Sarath Amunugama, a civil servant who was Director of the Department of Information at the time, recalls in his autobiography: “The PM took the initiative to offer an amnesty to the ‘misguided youth’... This approach worked well, and thousands of JVP sympathisers, especially those who had only attended the five lectures, began to give themselves up at designated points... The government, and particularly the PM, earned the plaudits of the international community for the humane manner in which this uprising was contained.” (right)



Sri Lanka started issuing National Identity Cards (NICs) in 1972, and it has become mandatory for all citizens above the age of 15. The first NIC was issued to Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike on 14 September 1972, and it bore No: 166080010V. This card is now on display at the Sirimavo Bandaranaike Museum in Colombo.



The Prime Minister watches as Finance Minister Dr N M Perera presents the National Savings Bank Act No 30 of 1971 in Parliament. It led to the creation of the state-owned NSB that commenced operations in early 1972.



Mrs Bandaranaike tours the country promoting her government's campaign to grow more food locally to increase self-sufficiency and reduce import costs. In May 1977, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) recognised these efforts when they selected her for the annual Ceres Medal.

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On 1 January 1972, a new hybrid orchid named Dendrobium Sirimavo Bandaranaike was unveiled in honour of the Prime Minister.

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International Labour Day, also known as May Day, was observed in Ceylon for many years. But it was late Mr S W R D Bandaranaike's government that declared it a public holiday in 1956.

The SLFP has always mobilised its trade unions and supporters to observe the May Day. Leaders of the ruling United Front are adopting resolutions at the May Day of 1973.



Mrs Bandaranaike enjoys a lighter moment with President William Gopallawa and some of her ministers on 22 January 1974.

Mr M D D Pieris, who worked closely with her as Secretary, has written: "The Prime Minister had no intellectual pretensions. But she was by now a seasoned politician and a charismatic leader, intelligent, quick on the uptake and much respected at home and abroad. It was a serious error to treat her as some kind of lightweight..."



The Ceylon Shipping Corporation was set up in June 1971 through an Act of Parliament as the national maritime carrier. Beginning with the first ship Lanka Rani, CSC acquired several cargo vessels with German collaboration (Vnimar Gesselschaft GMBH of Hamburg), and later added two more with Chinese support.

Photo shows Mrs Bandaranaike taking part in the commissioning of the ship named Lanka Sagarika. Standing on her right is Mr P B G Kalugalla, Minister of Shipping and Tourism. (*Left*)

The Prime Minister arrives with the Minister of Shipping and Tourism to commission the oil tanker 'Tammanna' acquired by the CSC. (*Right*)





A few weeks before Colombo hosted the fifth Non-Aligned Summit, the country's first satellite earth station was commissioned in Padukka, 35 km east of Colombo, in May 1976. The Japanese built facility connected Sri Lanka's telecommunications network to telecommunications and broadcast satellites over the Indian Ocean, thus enabling international direct dialling for the first time. Joining the Prime Minister in opening the station is Mr Chelliah Kumarasuriar, the Minister of Posts and Telecommunications.



Phase I of Mahaweli River diversion programme was implemented from 1970 to 1977. It entailed building a barrage across the Mahaweli at Polgolla to divert water through a pressure tunnel 8 km long to a hydro power plant of 40 MW installed capacity at the nearby Amban Ganga basin. The water was then taken through another 6.4 km tunnel and canals to help cultivate over 200,000 acres (80,937 ha) of Dry Zone land.

During the election campaign of 1970, the United Front had pledged to set up a new public university in the Northern Province to enhance higher educational opportunities for youth in that region. Keeping that promise, the University of Jaffna was established in 1974 as the sixth campus of the University of Sri Lanka. On 6 October 1974 Mrs Bandaranaike declared open the University of Jaffna at the Parameshwara College which had been founded by Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan in 1921.

Photo shows Mrs Bandaranaike with Mr Alfred Duraiappah, the Mayor of Jaffna. A former Parliamentarian and the SLFP chief organiser in Jaffna District, Mr Duraiappah was shot dead by masked men a few months later, on 27 July 1975. In 1978, the then nascent Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) claimed responsibility for his murder.

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Mrs Bandaranaike in front of the statue of her husband, Mr S W R D Bandaranaike, at Galle Face, Colombo. The statue, created by the well-known Soviet sculptor Lev Kerbel, was gifted by the USSR government and opened on 17 July 1976. It commemorates the late Prime Minister who established diplomatic relations between Sri Lanka and the Soviet Union in 1957. *(Above)*

The Prime Minister turns on a new lighting system for Dalada Maligawa in Kandy. *(Right)*





‘
I was often asked the question how I functioned with an all-male Cabinet. I must say that I had no problems. They all co-operated and gave me all the support necessary. Well, I appointed my Cabinet of Ministers!

’
Mrs Bandaranaike



‘
History is full of examples of the disastrous consequences that
came upon such nations that changed their constitutions by
giving one man too much power.

’
Mrs Bandaranaike